

# General Advisory Board Meeting

## NJVDRS

Murder-Suicide in New Jersey, 1996-2003

Homicide in 7 New Jersey Cities, 2003

December 9, 2004



# Murder-suicide in New Jersey

There were 73 incidents of murder-suicide from 1996 to 2003

73 suicides, or **1.6%** of 4,589 total suicides  
89 homicides, or **3.2%** of 2,785 total homicides

**6.8%** of suicides in murder-suicide were women  
**70.8%** of homicides in murder-suicide were women

**12.4%** of homicides in murder-suicide were  
under 18 years old



# Murder-Suicide in New Jersey

- 2003 rate: .36 /100,000 population, similar to national figures
- Florida believed to have nation's highest rate
- Difficulty with measurement – role of NVDRS

# Major types of murder-suicide

- Intimate partner
  - Male sexual jealousy/romantic triangle
  - Older married couple
- “Familicide”
  - Male kills intimate partner and children
  - Adult child kills parents

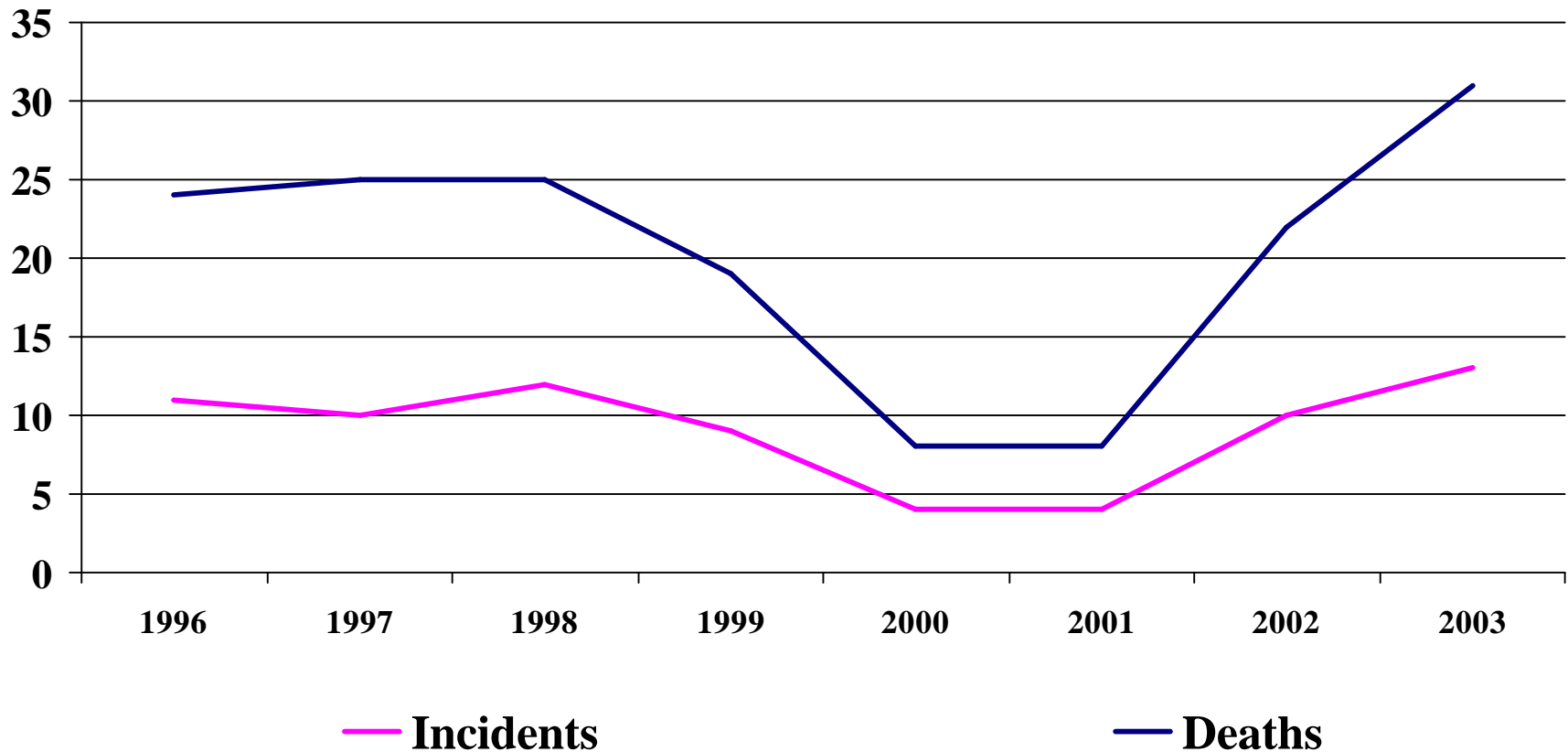
# Murder suicide among the elderly

- Increasing nationally
- Often occurs when husband in care-taking role
- Untreated depression
- “Controlling” husband
- Believed to almost never be a suicide pact
- Female often shot while asleep

# Murder-suicide in New Jersey, 1996-2003

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Number of incidents	11	10	12	9	4	4	10	13	73
Number of deaths	24	25	25	19	8	8	22	31	162
Multiple victim incidents	2	3	1	1	0	0	2	3	12
Intimate Partner incidents (Past or present)	9	5	8	6	2	3	7	10	50
Parent/child or child/parent incidents (any age)	0	4	2	1	1	0	2	3	13
Number of deaths (P-C), children 0-18 yrs	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	4	10
Number of incidents, suspect over 60 yrs old	0	0	3	0	1	0	1	3	8
% incidents involving firearm	90.9	90.0	83.3	66.7	100	75.0	30.0	61.5	72.6

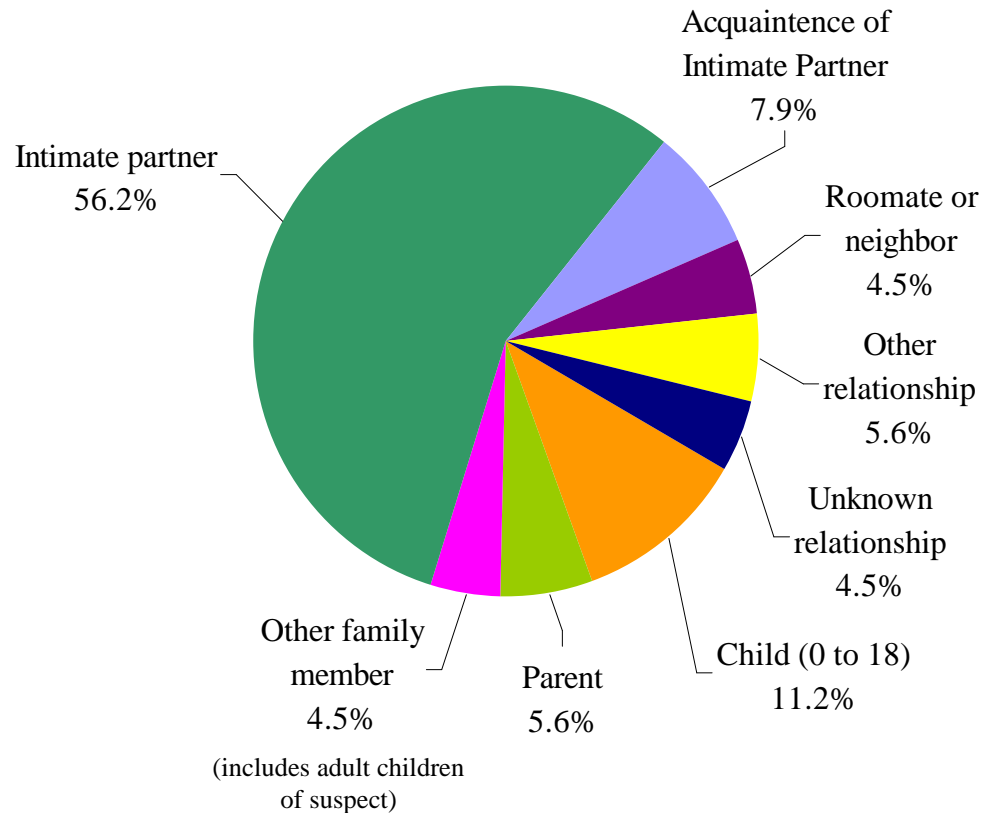
# Trend in murder-suicide, New Jersey, 1996-2003\*



\*Data from 1996 to 2002 from Lexus-Nexis and MCD mortality data;  
2003 from NVDRS



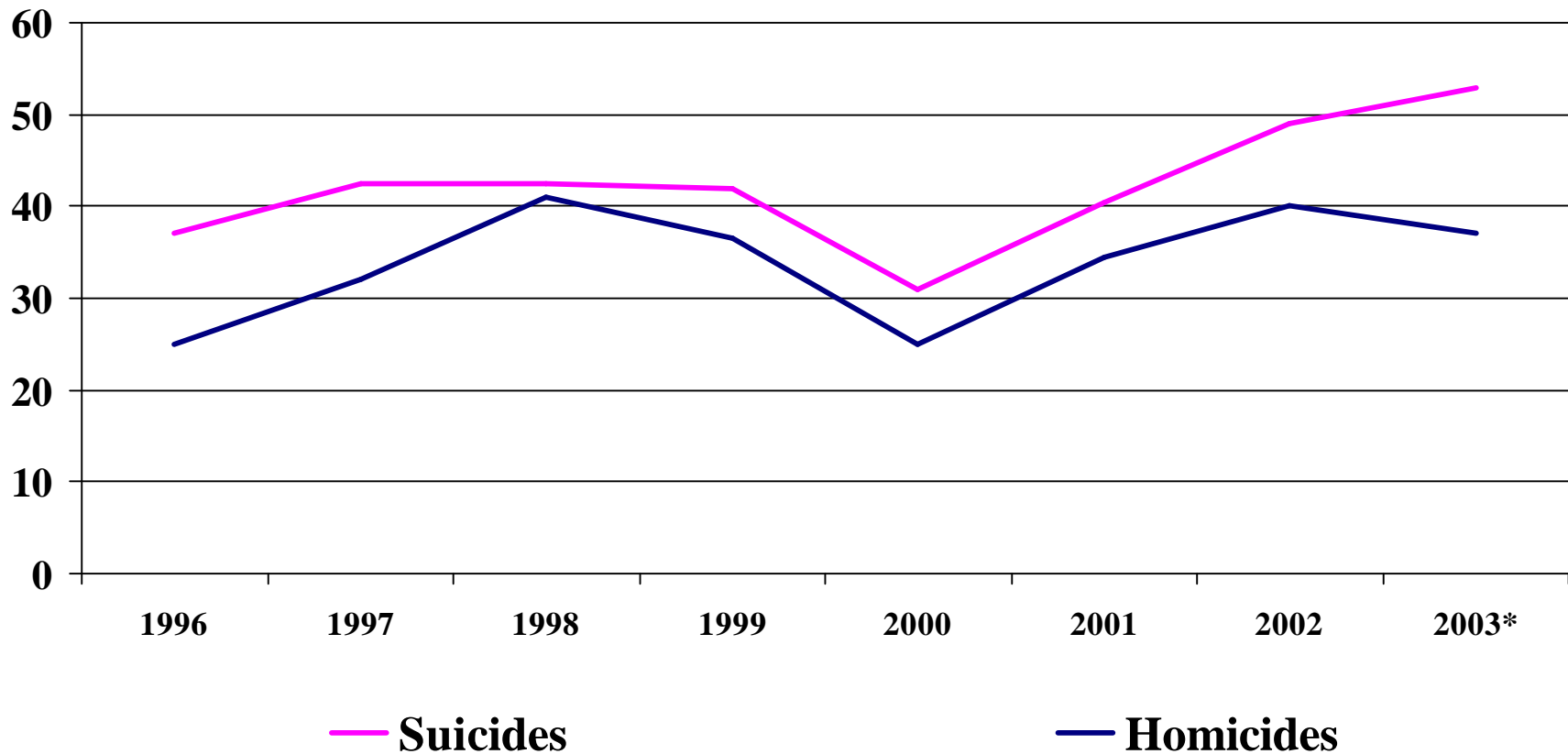
# Victim-offender relationship in murder-suicides New Jersey, 1996-2003



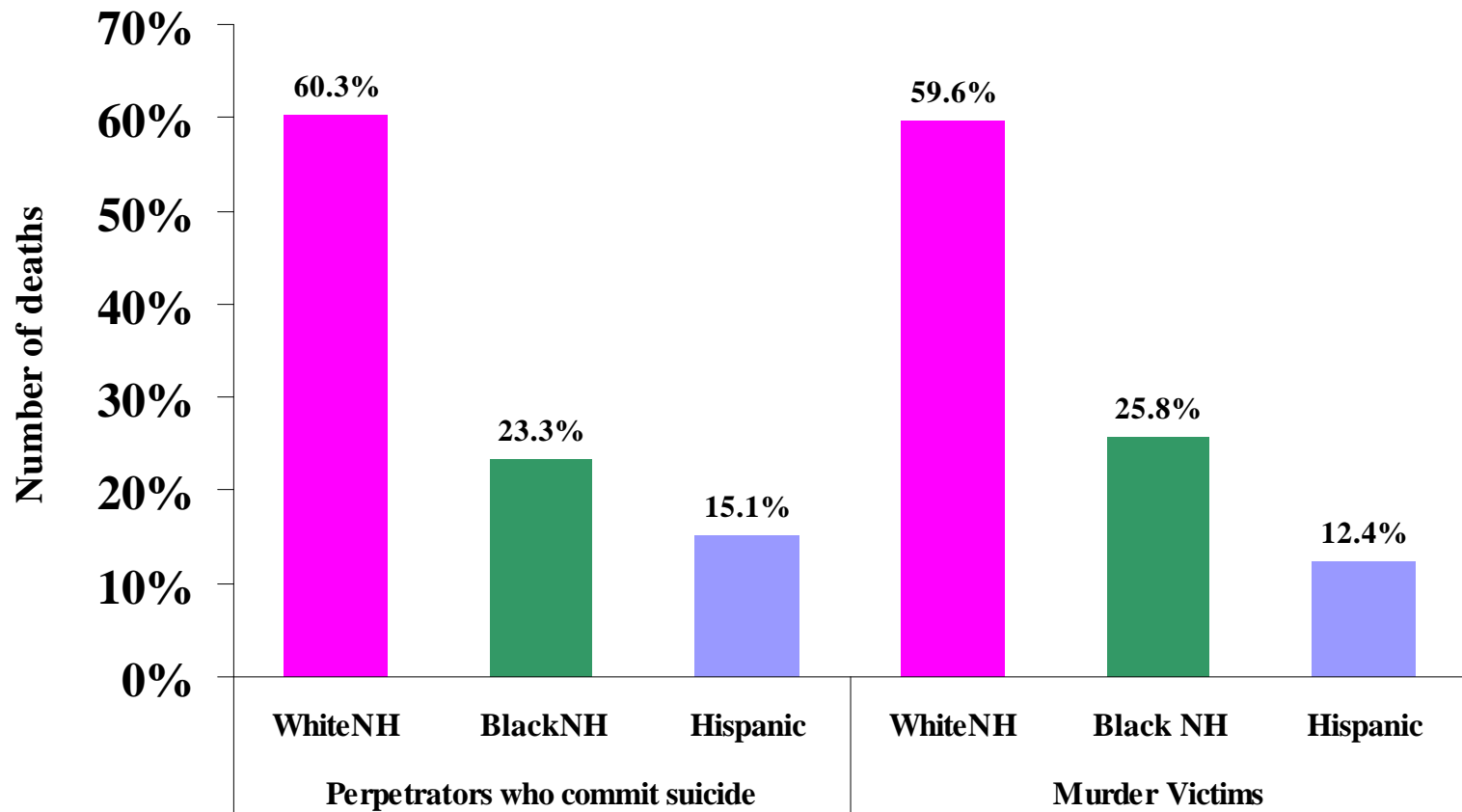
“The **victim** is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the **suspect**”



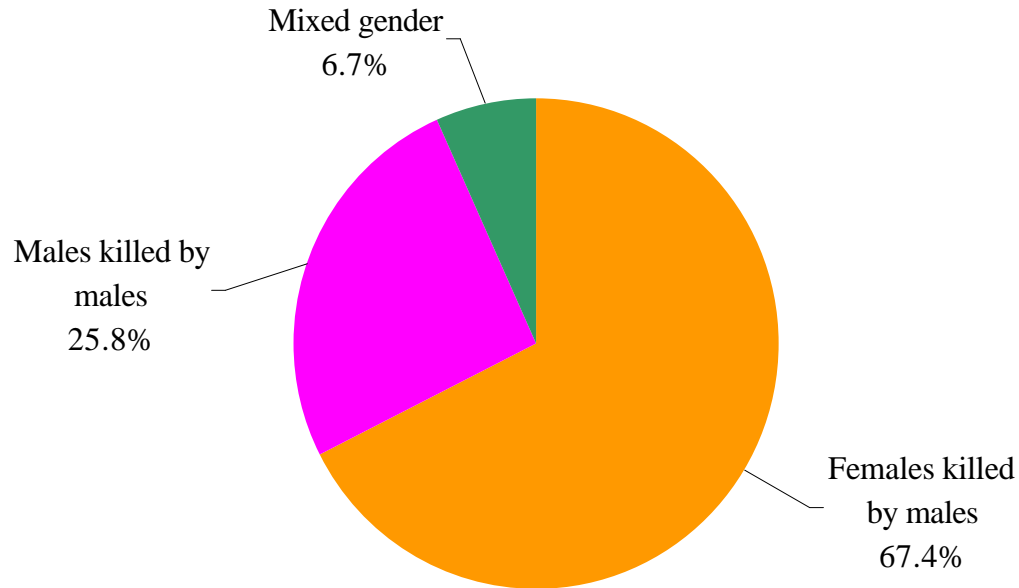
# Median age of murder-suicide victims, New Jersey, 1996-2003



# Race and ethnicity of murder-suicide victims, New Jersey, 1996-2003



# Gender relationships in murder-suicides, New Jersey, 1996-2003



F killed by M	F killed by F	M killed by M	M killed by F
60	4	23	2

# Suicides in M/S incidents as compared with all suicides are more likely to be:

- Male
- Black or Hispanic
- Foreign-born
- Middle-aged
- Committed with firearms

Males who kill their female intimate partners are on average 5.5 years older than their victims

# Murder-suicides in New Jersey, 1996-2003

## M/S suicides versus all suicides

	Suicide in M-S	All Suicides
Median age	43 years	44.5 years
% Male	93.2%	78.9%
% Foreign born	26.0%	18.2%
% White	60.3%	81.0%
% Black	23.3%	8.7%
% Hispanic	15.1%	6.7%
% 18 and under	2.7%	3.1%
% 65 and over	11.0%	18.7%

# Homicides in M/S incidents as compared with all homicides are:

- Older

Also are more likely to be:

- Female
- White
- Age 65+
- Committed with firearms

# Murder-suicides in New Jersey, 1996-2003

## M/S homicides versus all homicides

	Homicide in M-S	All Homicides (excluding 9/11)
Median age	36 years	28.5 years
% Female	70.8%	23.8%
% Foreign born	22.5%	21.5%
% White	59.6%	24.9%
% Black	25.8%	54.3%
% Hispanic	12.4%	17.8%
% 18 and under	11.2%	13.6%
% 65 and over	10.1%	4.7%

# Murder-suicides in New Jersey, 1996-2003

Mechanism	M-S Suicide		All Suicides		M-S Homicide		All Homicide (excluding 9/11)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Firearm	58	79.5%	1440	31.4%	69	77.5%	1535	55.1%
All other mechanisms	15	20.5%	2745	59.8%	20	22.5%	1250	44.9%

Firearm Violence	Incidents	% Incidents	Deaths	Deaths/ incident
All deaths in incident by firearm	55	75.3%	124	2.25
Homicides by firearm, suicide by other means	NONE			
Suicide by firearm, homicide by other means	3	--	6	2
No death in incident by firearm	15	20.5%	32	2.13



# Circumstances of M/S Suicides versus all suicides, New Jersey, 2003

Circumstances	M-S Suicide	All Suicides	
	N	N	%
Perpetrator of interpersonal violence in past month	7	13	2.2%
Intimate partner problem	4	122	20.4%
Crisis in past two weeks	2	91	15.2%
History of suicide attempts	1	99	16.5%
Left suicide note	2	177	29.5%
Physical health problem	1	111	18.5%
Depression	1	198	33.1%
No known circumstances	5	122	20.4%
Total suicides	13	599	

# Murder-suicides in New Jersey, 2003

Circumstances	M-S Homicide	All Homicides	
	N	N	%
Intimate partner violence-related	10	59	13.8%
Other homicide circumstances	1	12	2.8%
Argument over money or property	1	13	3.0%
No known circumstances	6	144	33.6%
Total Homicides	18	428	

# Notes about these tables and figures

- Incidents were included in this presentation if the incident either occurred in New Jersey or at least one of the deaths was a New Jersey resident, regardless of location of incident.
- The incidents were found by searching newspapers using Lexus-Nexis for 1996-2002, reviewing the medical examiner data files, and using NVDRS for 2003.
- Two incidents are included in our death listing (not shown) but not in the tables. One is the case of a multiple state serial killer; while he did commit suicide after the serial murders of 5 other people, the situation is not comparable to the acts of impulsiveness otherwise included. Likewise is an incident where a woman committed suicide while in custody awaiting extradition to NJ from PA for the murder of her sister-in-law over six months before.
- Victims under the age of 18 are listed as "Child" of the suspect where applicable. If the victim is the offspring of the killer and over 18, they are listed as family member of the killer, unless otherwise noted.



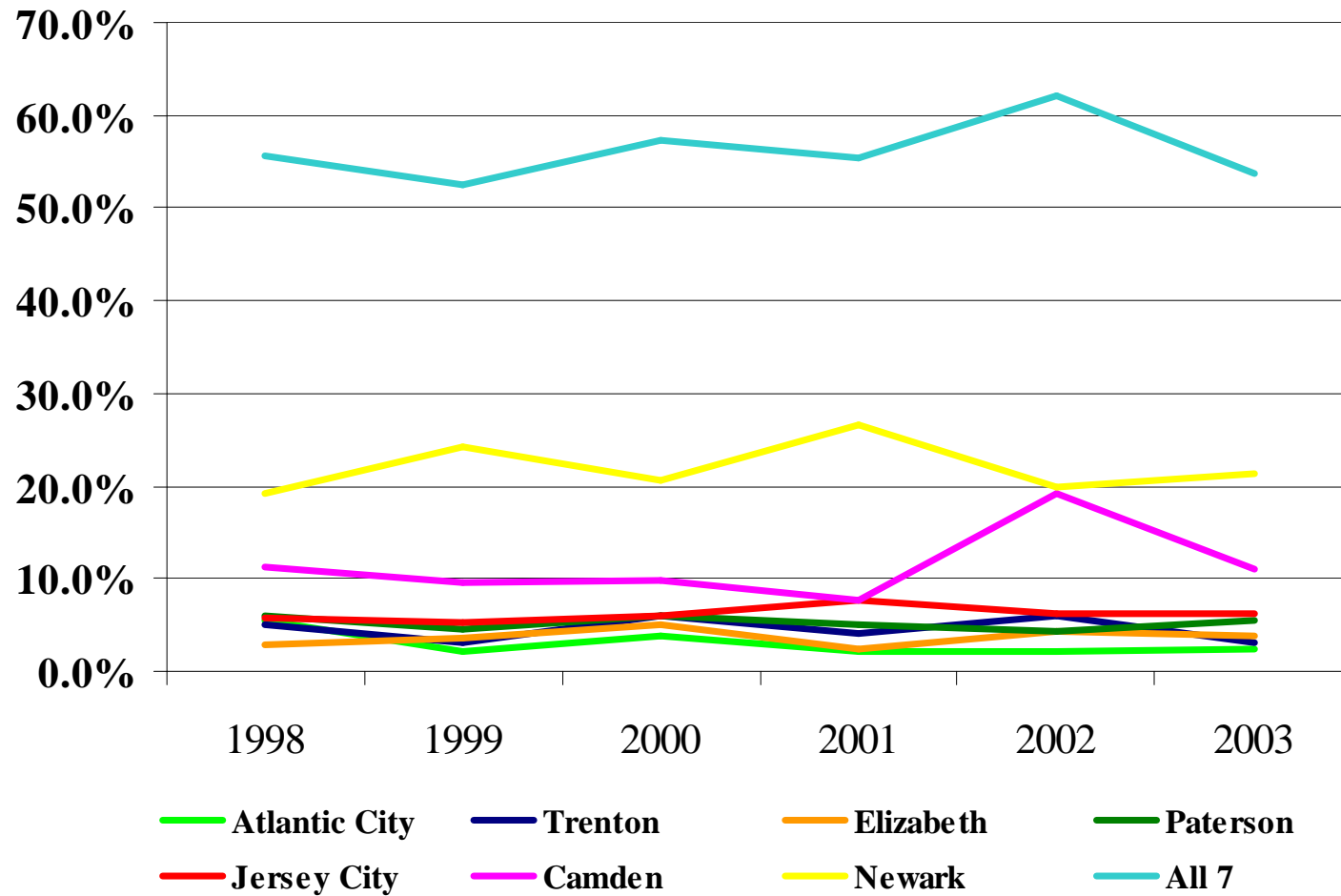
# Homicides in 7 New Jersey Cities, 2003

The “Urban 6” cities:

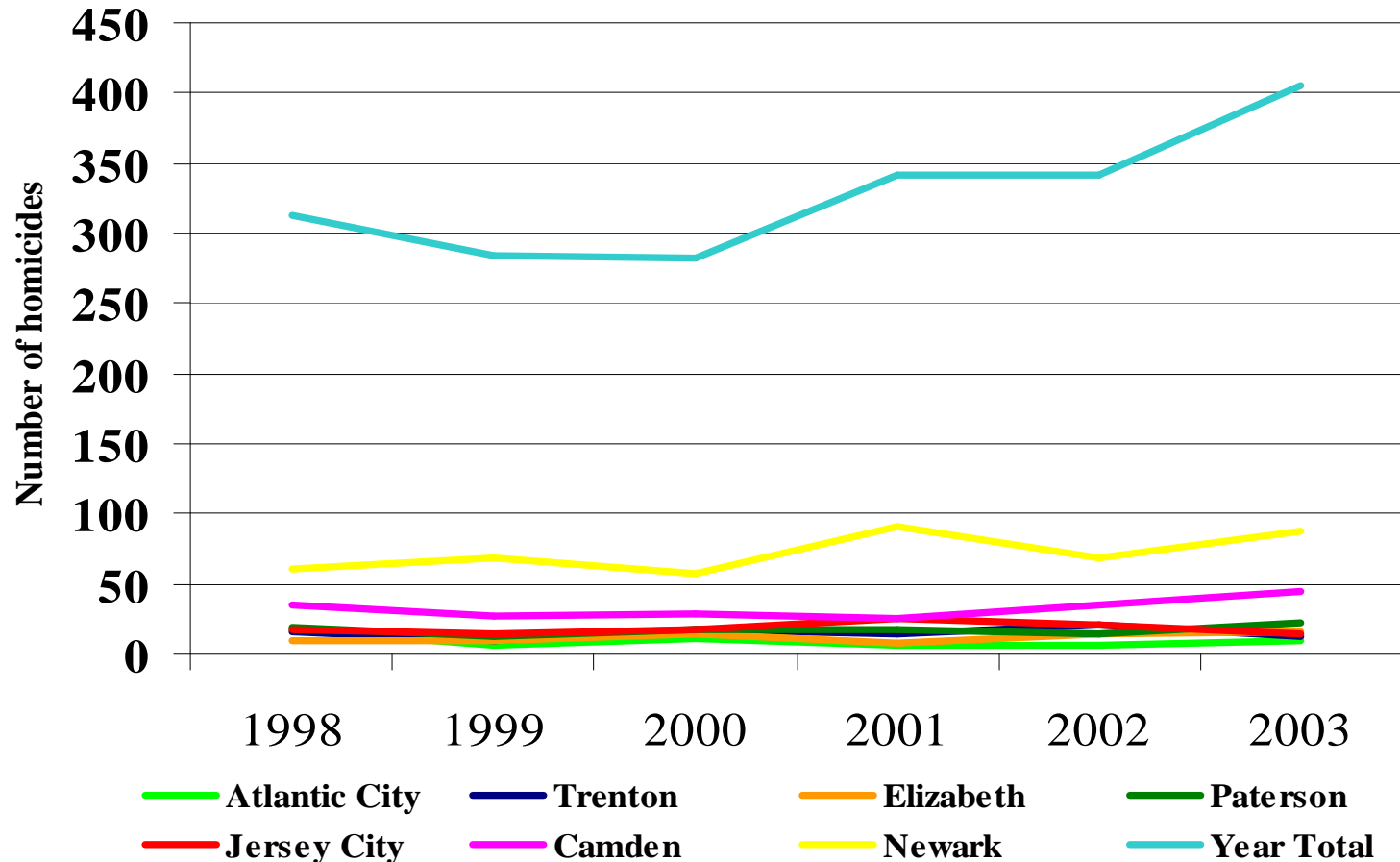
Newark, Camden, Jersey City,  
Elizabeth, Paterson, Trenton; added  
Atlantic City



# Percent of state-wide homicides occurring in selected municipalities, 1998-2003



# Homicides in 7 cities and statewide, 1998-2003



Source: Uniform Crime Report, 1998-2003, occurrence data



# Characteristics of homicide victims in 7 cities and statewide, 2003

Characteristics	7 Cities	All other municipalities
Total Homicides	201	209
Median Age	29	29
% 18 and under	4.5%	12.9%
% 65 and over	4.8%	1.5%
% Male	84.9%	70.8%
% Black	71.0%	47.9%
% White	18.3%	41.1%
% Hispanic	18.8%	16.4%
% Foreign Born	13.2%	19.6%

Source: NJVDRS, 2003, NJ resident data



# Mechanism of homicide in 7 cities and statewide, 2003

Mechanism of injury	7 Cities		All other municipalities	
	N	%	N	%
Firearm	145	72.1%	109	52.1%
Sharp object	27	13.4%	53	25.3%
Blunt Object	11	5.4%	5	2.4%
Strangulation	6	3.2%	13	6.2%
Other or unknown	12	6.0%	29	13.9%
Total	201	100%	209	100%

Source: NJVDRS, 2003, NJ resident data



# Circumstances of homicide in 7 cities and statewide, 2003

Circumstances	7 Cities		All other municipalities	
	N	%	N	%
Intimate partner	3	--	14	6.6%
Immediate family	4	--	16	7.5%
Stranger	23	11.3%	14	6.6%
Acquaintance/friend	28	13.7%	29	13.7%
Police officer	3	--	2	--
Unknown	43	21.1%	22	10.4%
Missing	100	49.0%	115	54.2%

Source: NJVDRS, 2003, NJ resident data



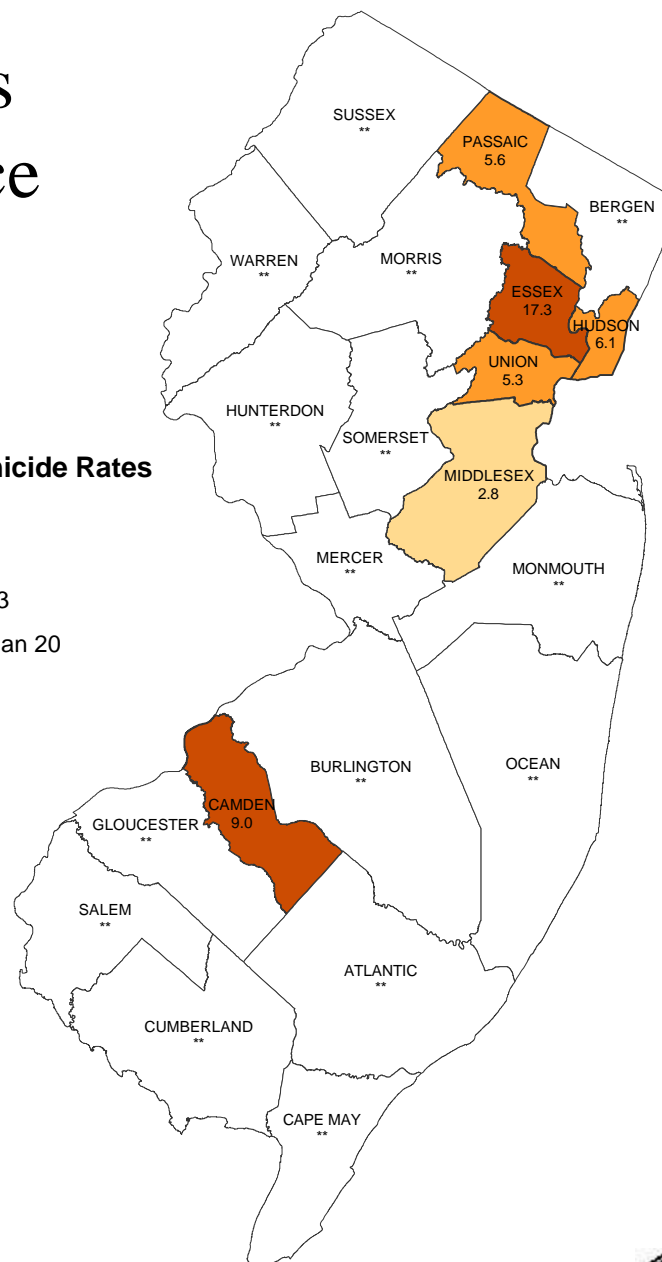
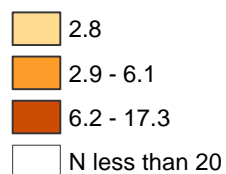
# Other crimes in commission at time of homicide in 7 cities and statewide, 2003

Other crimes in commission	7 Cities		All other municipalities	
	N	%	N	%
Robbery	8	4.0%	2	--
Rape/other sex offence	0	--	3	--
Argument	22	10.9%	16	7.7%
Brawl while using drugs or alcohol	12	5.9%	2	--
Arson/lover's triangle	1	--	2	--
Gang-related	1	--	3	--
Drug-related	34	16.9%	43	20.6%
Killed by police	1	--	0	--
Non-felony crime	1	--	10	4.8%
Other	2	--	9	4.3%
Circumstance unknown	36	17.9%	24	11.5%
Missing	83	41.3%	95	45.4%

# Crude Homicide Rates By County of Residence

New Jersey, 2003

## Crude Homicide Rates

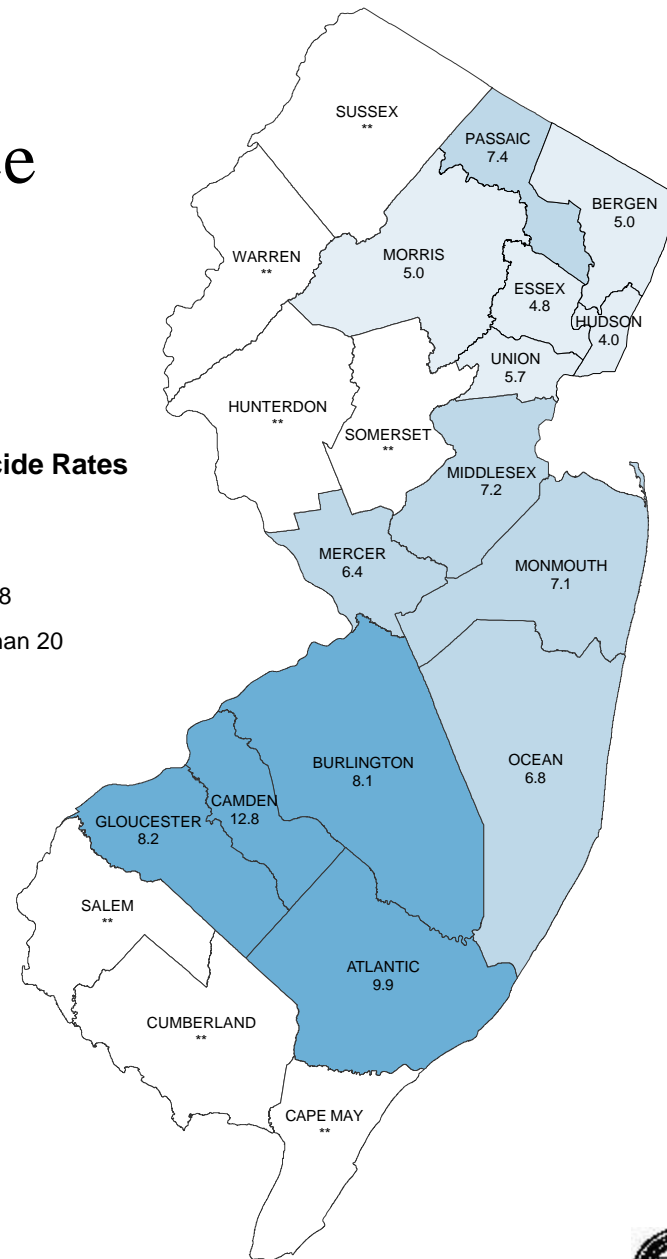
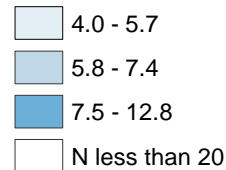


0 15 30 60 Miles

# Crude Suicide Rates By County of Residence

## New Jersey, 2003

### Crude Suicide Rates



0 15 30 60 Miles

